



# Lambda Letters Project

32593

Vol. 5, No. 10    October, 1997    [www.humboldt1.com/~mamurphy/lambdaletters](http://www.humboldt1.com/~mamurphy/lambdaletters)    [LambdaLP@aol.com](mailto:LambdaLP@aol.com)    (916) 965-6851

## A Parable

Lavender Library, Archives  
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Once there was a man who lived in a land very much like our own. He was a very ordinary person in all respects except for two things. He had a dream, and he had a stubborn determination to do all he could to make that dream come true.

He lived in a land where prominent people spoke with pride of their bigotry and encouraged others to follow their bigoted lead. Sadly, other leading figures were indifferent to such bigotry. They did nothing to oppose it.

The land was surrounded on all sides by a sea of bigotry. But the man dreamed of building a bridge on which he and his people could walk to freedom, to a world in which bigotry was firmly opposed and where people could fully and openly be themselves, all of themselves, with pride and without fear.

So the man gathered a few friends together and they set out to build a bridge. They were people of modest means and so they appealed to the community for money to cover the cost of building the bridge. The community was very generous and the contributions flowed in. To be honest, there was never quite enough money to do the job completely, but nonetheless, the people were truly generous.

As the bridge was being built, the people became

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## HRC: A Dubious Honor

Recently the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) announced that President Clinton will be the keynote speaker at an upcoming HRC dinner in Washington, DC. This will be the first time that a sitting president has participated in a g/l/b/t civil rights event. That's an historic event and normally would be the occasion for rejoicing. However, both the president and the HRC have mixed records.

President Clinton has made a mess of the military's policy on sexual orientation. Not only did he approve the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, but even that bad policy is being widely violated in his military. Lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered military personnel are being actively pursued. The number of military discharges for sexual orientation has been higher during his term in office than in any recent comparable period.

President Clinton also signed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which denies federal benefits to same-sex couples. It also allows states to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages that occur legally in other states. The president's administration has also steadfastly refused to support clean-needle exchange programs. His Secretary of Health and Human Services has refused to issue an order that would make them legal nationwide.

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## Lambda Letters Progress Report

### Letters Collected

August, 1997	4,776 letters
In all of 1997	34,344 letters

### Dollars Spent

August, 1997	\$1,311
In all of 1997	\$11,328

### Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.



# Lambda Letters Project

## Statement of Purpose

To promote people of color, feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and HIV/AIDS status advocacy, and to bring people of color, women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered persons, and persons affected by or living with HIV/AIDS into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof.

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Publication of the name of any person or organization in articles or advertising in the Lambda Letters Project newsletter is not to be construed as any indication of the sexual orientation of such person or organization.

## Confidentiality

The Lambda Letters Project does not sell or loan its mailing list to anyone. We give no information about who is, or is not, a member of the Project. We do, occasionally, send mailings on behalf of other worthwhile organizations, but this is done by our own volunteers so that no other organization has the opportunity to copy our mailing lists.

The Lambda Letters Newsletter is published monthly except in December by The Lambda Letters Project Inc.,

6212 Silverton Way, Carmichael, CA 95608.

Postmaster: send address changes to the address above.

## Advertising Rates

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\*These cities share an office.

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## Consensual Sex OK in the Military?

Despite "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the military has used threats of criminal prosecution under military sodomy laws in ongoing witch hunts. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual service members have been threatened with imprisonment under these laws unless they reveal names of other gay and lesbian military personnel to their commanders.

Representative Barney Frank's bill, H.R. 1915, also known as the "Anti-Hypocrisy Act," would remove private consensual sex between adults, such as adultery and sodomy, from the Uniform Code of Military Justice. H.R. 1915 was introduced on the heels of the outcry caused by the criminal prosecution of Lt. Kelly Flinn for adultery, a prosecution which subjected the U.S. military to news coverage and ridicule at home and around the world.

H.R. 1915 explicitly allows the military to regulate fraternization and to undertake noncriminal or administrative actions against personnel for misconduct—sexual or otherwise. It does not repeal the discriminatory "Don't Ask" policy, however. The importance of Frank's bill to gays, lesbians, and bisexuals is that it removes the heaviest weapon from the arsenal of military investigators who continue to hunt and harass military personnel based on their suspected sexual orientation.

Frank points out that when heterosexuals run afoul of the military's criminal sanctions against consensual sexual practices, "they find it as oppressive and unfair as gays and lesbians have."

Please sign and return the letter urging your Congressman to support H.R. 1915, or use our letter as a basis to compose your own.

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## Asking Promise Keepers to Lighten Up

Promise Keepers, a not-for-profit organization, currently boasts a staff of 452 people and a budget of over \$117 million for 1997. The organization claims to be a "Christian outreach to men" that encourages men to "live godly lives and to keep seven basic promises of commitment to God, their families, and fellow man." According to their Web site ([www.promisekeepers.org](http://www.promisekeepers.org)), "Promise Keepers seeks to unite Christian men of all races, denominations, ages, cultures, and socio-economic groups, believing that accountable relationships among men are critical in helping one another become promise keepers in their relationships with God, their wives, their children, and each other."

Although some goals of Promise Keepers may sound admirable on the surface, the organization actively vilifies gays and lesbians, is staunchly antiabortion, and preaches that women should willingly submit to their husbands. Promise Keepers is also supported by such far-right organizations such as the Christian Coalition and the Heritage Foundation. Bill McCartney, founder and CEO, has spoken at Operation Rescue meetings and even served on the board of Colorado for Family Values, the sponsors of Colorado's anti-gay Amendment 2. One of Promise Keepers' most dynamic speakers, Tony Evans, summed up the group's attitude toward women nicely when he said, "Now a lot of women don't like to hear me say this, but I believe that feminists of the more aggressive persuasion are frustrated women unable to find the proper male leadership." Please sign the enclosed letter encouraging Bill McCartney and Promise Keepers to soften their views on homosexuality and abortion and to respect women as equals.

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## Help California's Native Americans

California's Native Americans got a raw deal right from the start. In the 1760s the Franciscans began building the missions in California. The local Indian tribes helped build the missions, sometimes as forced laborers. In return for their work, the Franciscans promised half the mission lands would revert to the Indians. Later, when Mexico gained its independence from Spain, many of the missions were broken up and given or sold to private, non-Indian owners.

When California became American territory in the 1850s, the U.S. Government signed treaties with California's Indians agreeing to cede 8.5 million acres of land to the tribes in return for their dropping any claims to the rest of the state. However, California's legislature objected to the treaties, and 18 of them were never ratified by Congress. That left most California tribes without land.

Over the years the federal government established benefits for the members of recognized Indian tribes. The benefits included money for education, health care, road building, and other supportive services. However, tribal recognition was given primarily to tribes that have land. Since most California tribes don't have land, fewer of them have been recognized and the process of obtaining recognition has been much more difficult for them. Only one California tribe has gained recognition from the federal government in the last 19 years. The application process can cost as much as \$1 million and many tribes just can't afford it.

As a result, the average California Indian gets about \$350 per year in federal aid while those in other states receive an average of \$634 per year. Some tribes

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## Allowing Clean Needles to Ward Off HIV

Unsafe injection practices among drug users remains one of the primary ways that HIV is transmitted in California and the nation.

H.R. 2212 would require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to offer grants to state and local governments for sterile hypodermic needle exchange programs in order to reduce the incidence of the transmission of HIV through the sharing of dirty needles. This federal bill was introduced in the House of Representatives last July and has since then been stuck in the Subcommittee on Health and Environment of the House Committee on Commerce. Since sponsoring the bill (on July 22nd), Representative Cummings (D-Maryland) has been joined by three cosponsors: Representatives Pelosi (D-San Francisco), Woolsey (D-Santa Rosa), and Farr (D-Monterey).

This bill would have the Secretary of Health and Human Services issue grants to states—and political subdivisions of states—to carry out clean-needle exchange projects in order to slow the spread of AIDS. Under these programs, sterile hypodermic needles would be made available to intravenous drug users without charge.

The importance of this bill is this: about one-third of all AIDS cases in the U.S. have been associated with injection drug use.

A preponderance of research shows that needle exchange programs decrease the spread of HIV. For instance, a study conducted at Yale University Medical School reported a *one-third decline* in the HIV infection rate eight months after sterile hypodermic syringes were distributed to drug users. The Centers for Disease

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# State Legislative Update: Part VI

Here is a report on the status (as of late September) of the bills covered in our monthly newsletter and sample letters, as well as those covered in our frequent e-mail alerts. We have divided them into the four issue areas that we cover. Note that the list does not include bills that we covered in earlier months, but which died along the way. Each month we eliminate bills that were reported as defeated in the previous month's newsletter.

Under the rules of the state legislature, each bill had to be approved by its house of origin and sent to the governor no later than September 12th. Any bill failing to meet that deadline died. However, either house of the legislature may "grant reconsideration" of a bill that is not approved and sent to the governor by the deadline. This means the bill's author may bring the bill up again for reconsideration when the legislature reconvenes next January.

The governor must sign or veto any bills sent to him by no later than October 12th. If he fails to take any action on a bill by that date, the bill becomes law without his signature.

In the following list you will see any of four descriptions on the status line for each bill. Those descriptions and their meaning are as follows:

- ♦ **To the governor:** These bills have passed both houses of the Legislature and been sent to the governor for signature.
- ♦ **Signed by the governor:** These bills have become law.
- ♦ **Vetoed by the governor:** These bills will not become law.
- ♦ **Two-year bill:** These bills did not make it out of the legislature by the deadline, but the legislature granted permission for the author to bring the bills up again next year.



## HIV/AIDS Issues

**A.B. 29** (Villaraigosa, D-Los Angeles)

**Purpose:** To allow compassionate release of terminally ill prisoners.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** To the governor.

**A.B. 1099** (Migden, D-San Francisco)

**Purpose:** To continue Medi-Cal eligibility without a share of cost, or with a reduced share of cost, for individuals who return to work and are being treated for symptoms of HIV/AIDS or are disabled. These provisions would only apply until a person is eligible for and receives full medical insurance coverage, including prescription drug coverage, from his or her employer.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** To the governor.

**A.B. 1100** (Thomson, D-Fairfield)

**Purpose:** To require insurers to provide health insurance coverage for biologically based mental illnesses as fully as they provide coverage for other physical illnesses.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** Two-year bill.

**S.B. 535** (Vasconcellos, D-San Jose)

**Purpose:** Amended to authorize just research on the efficacy and safety of marijuana as a medicine.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** Two-year bill.

**S.B. 885** (Watson, D-Los Angeles)

**Purpose:** To establish clean-needle exchange pilot projects in four California cities.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** Two-year bill.

**S.B. 1035** (Polanco, D-Los Angeles)

**Purpose:** To establish a pilot project to study the cost effectiveness of early intervention for HIV-positive patients who otherwise qualify for Medi-Cal but are not yet disabled (generally those who do not have full-blown AIDS).

*Continued on page 6*



## Legislative Update

*Continued from page 5*

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** To the governor.

**S.B. 1110** (Leslie, R-Roseville)

**Purpose:** To establish new parental notification requirements before students could be given age appropriate HIV/AIDS education. Generally would make it harder for schools to give the education. Some might give up.

**LLP Position:** Oppose.

**Status:** Two-year bill.

### L/G/B/T Issues

**A.B. 257** (Villaraigosa, D-Los Angeles)

**Purpose:** To add a ban on sexual orientation-based discrimination to the Fair Employment and Housing Act. Would ban such discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** To the governor.

**A.B. 310** (Kuehl, D-Encino)

**Purpose:** To amend the Fair Employment and Housing Act in several ways. It would prohibit sexual harassment of contract workers by an employer. It also would make supervisors liable when they fail to stop discrimination against—or harassment of—one employee by another. The bill also requires employers to make reasonable accommodations for pregnant employees and prohibits employers from discriminating against employees or job applicants on the basis of genetic conditions. For example, they couldn't refuse to hire someone because their family has a history of sickle cell anemia. The bill also states that religious employers may not discriminate against employees on any basis *other than* religion. For example, Catholic Charities would be allowed to hire only Catholics. Under current law, religious organizations can discriminate on any basis.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** Two-year bill.

**A.B. 424** (Baldwin, R-La Mesa)

**Purpose:** To prevent California's state college and university system from throwing ROTC off campus because it discriminates against lesbians and gays. Under pressure, Baldwin added language that bans ROTC from such discrimination. However, other language in the bill says that ban will not take effect at the University of California unless the U.C. Regents take specific action to implement it.

**LLP Position:** Oppose.

**Status:** Two-year bill.

**A.B. 1059** (Migden, D-San Francisco)

**Purpose:** To require insurers to offer employers the option of offering domestic partner health benefits to their employees. Does not require employers to offer them to their employees.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** Two-year bill.

### People of Color Issues

**A.B. 51** (Murray, D-Culver City)

**Purpose:** To increase penalties for hate-based arson of churches.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** To the governor.

**A.B. 748** (Escutia, D-Huntington Park)

**Purpose:** To require that objective annual studies be done of the primary languages of limited English-proficient students and of their progress in learning English. Results of the study would be used to determine how to modify and improve the methods of teaching English to limited English-proficient students.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** To the governor.

**S.B. 6** (Alpert, D-San Diego)

**Purpose:** To relieve school districts of teaching core curriculum subjects in the primary languages of students with limited English skills.

**LLP Position:** Oppose.

**Status:** Two-year bill.

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## Legislative Update

*Continued from page 6*

### **S.B. 273** (Burton, D-San Francisco)

**Purpose:** To establish the California Prostate Cancer Fund to finance research into the cause, treatment, and cure of prostate cancer.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** To the governor.

### **S.B. 547** (Watson, D-Los Angeles)

**Purpose:** To establish the position of California Gang Prevention Director to coordinate a statewide effort to combat gangs.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** Vetoed by the governor.

### **S.B. 1313** (Leslie, R-Roseville)

**Purpose:** To provide loans for the repair or replacement of migrant farm worker housing destroyed in last January's floods.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** Signed by the governor.

## Women's Issues

### **A.B. 7** (Brown, D-Santa Rosa)

**Purpose:** To require health care plans—and some disability plans—to provide a minimum of 48 hours of inpatient hospital care for women undergoing a mastectomy, and no fewer than 24 hours of inpatient care following a lymph node dissection for the treatment of breast cancer.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** Two-year bill.

### **A.B. 12** (Figueroa, D-Fremont)

**Purpose:** To require insurers that provide mastectomy coverage to allow the treating physician, in consultation with the patient, to determine the necessary hospital stay after a mastectomy and to provide coverage for a post discharge follow-up visit by a licensed health care provider, within 48 hours of discharge, if ordered by the physician.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** Two-year bill.

### **A.B. 45** (Murray, D-Culver City)

**Purpose:** To add a fiancé(e) or someone with whom a domestic abuser has had a dating relationship to the list of legally recognizable victims of domestic abuse.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** To the governor.

### **A.B. 160** (Hertzberg, D-Van Nuys)

**Purpose:** To require that California health insurers include coverage for FDA-approved contraceptive drugs.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** Two-year bill.

### **A.B. 200** (Kuehl D-Encino)

**Purpose:** To require that the health, safety, and welfare of the child must be the judge's primary concern when determining who should have custody or visitation rights. If the judge grants custody to someone who is alleged to have a history of committing child or domestic abuse, then the court's order should specify why that person is being granted custody or visitation rights.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** To the governor.

### **S.B. 70** (Hayden, D-Los Angeles)

**Purpose:** To require insurance providers that cover mastectomies to also cover mammography, complications from a mastectomy, and prosthetic devices or reconstructive surgery to restore and achieve symmetry for a patient.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**Status:** To the governor.



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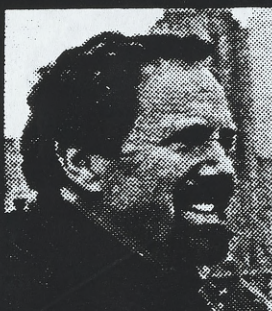
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Dr. Young will speak at dedication.

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6:30 - 7:00 pm: Dedication, 7:00 - 8:00 pm: Labyrinth walking time, refreshments, and time to browse bookstore.

Saturday, Nov. 22: Labyrinth Wellness Walk & Bookstore open 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Dr. Young will sign books in the morning

**Dr. Jonathan Young** is a storyteller, psychologist, and writer on sacred stories. His recent book is *SAGA - Best New Writings on Mythology*. He lectures at universities, writers' workshops, storytelling festivals, and conferences. Dr. Young was founding curator of the *Joseph Campbell Archives & Library*. He assisted Campbell and created the Mythological Studies Dept. at Pacifica Graduate Institute. He lives with his cat in an old house in Santa Barbara, California.

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## HIV/AIDS Issue

*Continued from page 1*

Control and Prevention recommends the use of sterile equipment for every injection in order to prevent the spread of blood-borne pathogens, as well.

Endorsements for the needle exchange programs include the American Bar Association, the American Public Health Association, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, the Academy of Sciences, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

## Coalition Politics Revisited

We received several responses to our recent article on coalition politics. They were divided evenly between those who supported and those who differed with the conclusions of the article. One of the best stated letters in support of the article went as follows:

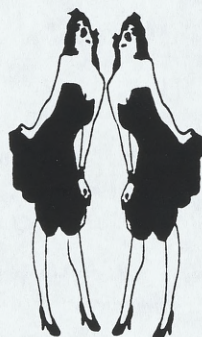
I really liked the article on coalition politics. Another reason to support people of color and feminist issues is that a good many lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered persons *are* people of color and feminists! Many of us inhabit that intersection. In fact, I think that's one of the reasons I signed up and stayed with LLP—because I felt I got the whole “picture,” and I didn't feel marginalized as a lesbian of color.

Each of us are many people; discrimination against any part of us is discrimination against all of us.

*Lavender  
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## Where to Get Them?

Currently three retail stores in Sacramento are selling Entertainment Books on behalf of Lambda Letters. We are looking for more individuals or stores, from throughout the state, who would be willing to sell the books for us. Please let us know if you would be willing to do so. The three current outlets for the books are:

- ♦ Compustations, 1819 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
- ♦ *Outword* Newsmagazine, 709 28th Street, Sacramento, CA 95816
- ♦ Dr. Cameron Yee, Optometrist, 6407 Riverside Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95831

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## People of Color Issue

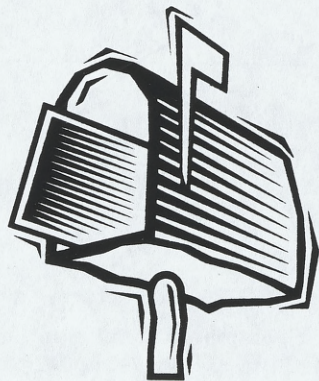
*Continued from page 1*

have opened gambling casinos to provide income, but less than one in twenty Indians receive any support from that source. Indians not working in the casinos face unemployment rates of 40 percent.

In 1992 an act of Congress conceded that "government policies and programs affecting California Indians" have resulted in "a continuing crisis, characterized by alcoholism and substance abuse, critical health problems, family violence and child abuse, and lack of educational and employment opportunities..." Congress established the Advisory Council on California Indian Policy and instructed it to recommend actions needed to remedy the problem. The Council is now presenting its recommendations to Congress. The recommendations are summarized in the enclosed sample letter. Please read the letter and then write to Congress supporting those recommendations.

## Become An Advocate!

Become our people of color advocate and help us choose one subject a month (usually a piece of legislation) that is of concern to the people of color community. You'll spend only about 10-12 hours a month researching possible subjects and composing letters and articles. Do you have Internet access? Lambda Letters can provide leads on sources of information and advice on composing letters and articles. This exciting position enables you to have a direct impact on legislation that affects our daily lives.



## HRC: A Dubious Honor

*Continued from page 1*

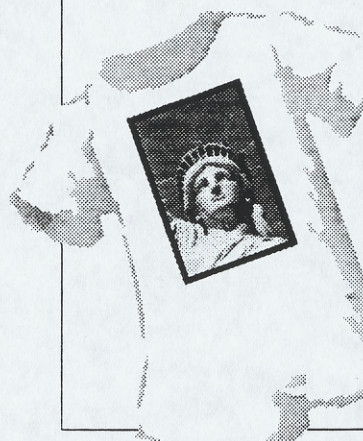
President Clinton's Justice Department refused to argue against Colorado's anti-gay Amendment 2 and has fought every attempt to persuade the courts to overturn the military's anti-gay policy. Is President Clinton a person you would want to invite to dinner?

Meanwhile, the HRC has a mixed record, too. For years they have fought adding protections for transgendered people to the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). They say adding transgendered people to the bill would kill it. However, there are widespread reports that the real reason stems from HRC's fears that it would lose contributions from its rich—but conservative—gay supporters if it supported the addition of transgendered people to the bill.

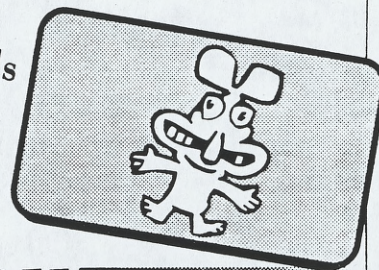
Having a sitting president speak at a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered organization's event is an historic accomplishment for that organization. However, asking the president to be keynote speaker is tantamount to bestowing an honor upon him. Given his record, extending Bill Clinton that honor may be a major error. It suggests that, no matter how badly he treats us, we will support him. It's a bad message to send—that attacking gays does not hurt his standing in the gay community. Since he believes that supporting gays hurts him and his party among some straight voters, the safest bet is to do nothing for gays. Do we want him to think that?

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## A Parable

*Continued from page 1*

excited. They loved to walk out upon the bridge even before it was complete. They loved the feeling that the bridge was becoming a path to a better world for them.

In time it became clear that more help was needed to build the bridge. The small group of builders had neither enough time or talent to complete the task. So they appealed again for help. They asked people to donate their time and talent to building the bridge. This time many fewer people responded. From time to time new people joined the workers, but almost always they were simply replacing someone else who could help no longer. Often replacements could not be found and the remaining workers had to double and triple their efforts to continue the building of the bridge.

Was the bridge ever completed? Not yet. Will it ever be completed? That is not yet clear. It depends on who hears this story and how they respond.

Who is the man and who are the group who joined him in building the bridge? They are myself and the wonderful people who have volunteered their services to the Lambda Letters Project.

What is the bridge? That's Lambda Letters itself. It's certainly not the only bridge to freedom. There are many others, such as LIFE Lobby, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, NOW, BiNet, the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy, etc.

However, Lambda Letters is the *only* California-based organization producing a consistent and high volume of letters to our legislators on the civil rights issues that concern us. We delivered over 48,000 letters

last year and have delivered over 36,000 more so far this year. To my knowledge, there is no similar effort in any other state and the only national organization with a similar program is the Human Rights Campaign.

Constituent mail of the sort produced by Lambda Letters is an absolutely crucial bridge to our freedom. Legislators want to get reelected. For that reason, they listen to the views expressed by the people in their districts, especially when they get a high volume of mail supporting one position or another. Lots of mail can affect the way a legislator votes.

So the bridge must be built. But where are the bridge builders? This year over 185 people have made cash contributions to Lambda Letters and we are deeply grateful for their support. But we have barely 30 volunteers to run an organization that is gaining national stature. That is no way to build the bridge.

We need volunteers to:

- ♦ Serve on our Board of Directors
- ♦ Search the Internet for important legislation
- ♦ Create e-mail alerts on legislation
- ♦ Create articles and sample letters on legislation
- ♦ Gather signatures on letters
- ♦ Do volunteer recruitment
- ♦ Help prepare our monthly mailings
- ♦ Do fund-raising
- ♦ Do publicity and public relations
- ♦ Help at Pride Festival booths

Help me make our dream a reality. Help us build the bridge. Let us know you will volunteer your services to Lambda Letters.

*Boyce Hinman, Administrator*

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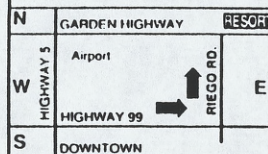
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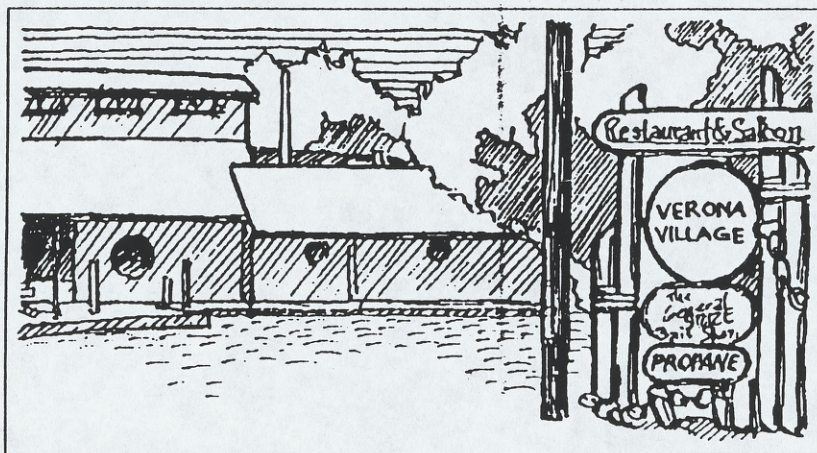
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## Do you Know Your Community's History?



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How, when and where did the modern G/L/B/T movement begin?

Who were the movers and shakers that shaped our community's history?

What were the major milestones in the G/L/B/T community's march to freedom?

What are the proudest moments in our community's history?

You can find the answers to these and many other fascinating questions in the Lambda Letters 1998 Calendar and Almanac of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History. Please support the work of the Lambda Letters Project by ordering your calendar today. At just \$7.95 per copy they are a steal and they make ideal holiday gifts for all your friends.

## Be Proud! Know Your History!

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